Annual Report

1983 - 1984

Alberta

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING

ISSN 0822-4382

Alberta

HOUSING

403 Legislature Building, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5K 2B6 403/427-3017

Office of the Minister

October 1984

The Honourable Frank Lynch-Staunton
Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Alberta
3rd Floor, Legislature Building
1 Legislature Grounds
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2B6

Sir:

The undersigned has the honour to submit the Annual Report of the Department of Housing for the year ending March 31, 1984.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry R. Shaben

Alberta
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING

403/427-3917

Office of
the Deputy Minister

3rd Floor, One Twelve Professional Centre
10050 - 112th Street,
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
T5K 2J1

October 1984

Honourable Larry R. Shaben
Minister of Housing
403 Legislature Building
1 Legislature Grounds
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2B6

Sir:

I have the honour to submit herewith a report on the activities of the Alberta Department of Housing for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1984.

Respectfully submitted,

M. D. Rasmusson
Deputy Minister

Table of Contents

PREFACE 1

ORGANIZATION CHART 2

I. POLICY AND PLANNING DIVISION 3

- Market and Economic Analysis Branch 3
- Planning and Research Branch 3
- Policy and Program Development Branch 4

II. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE DIVISION 5

- Municipal Housing Branch 5
- Home Improvement Branch 6
- Rural Home Assistance Branch 6
- Co-operative Housing Action Program Branch 7

III. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION DIVISION 8

- Finance Branch 8
- Administrative Services Branch 8
- Systems Branch 8

IV. MORTGAGE ASSISTANCE BRANCH 9

V. PUBLIC AFFAIRS BRANCH 11

VI. PERSONNEL BRANCH 12

VII. FINANCIAL STATEMENT 13

APPENDIX A — COMMITTEES 14

PREFACE

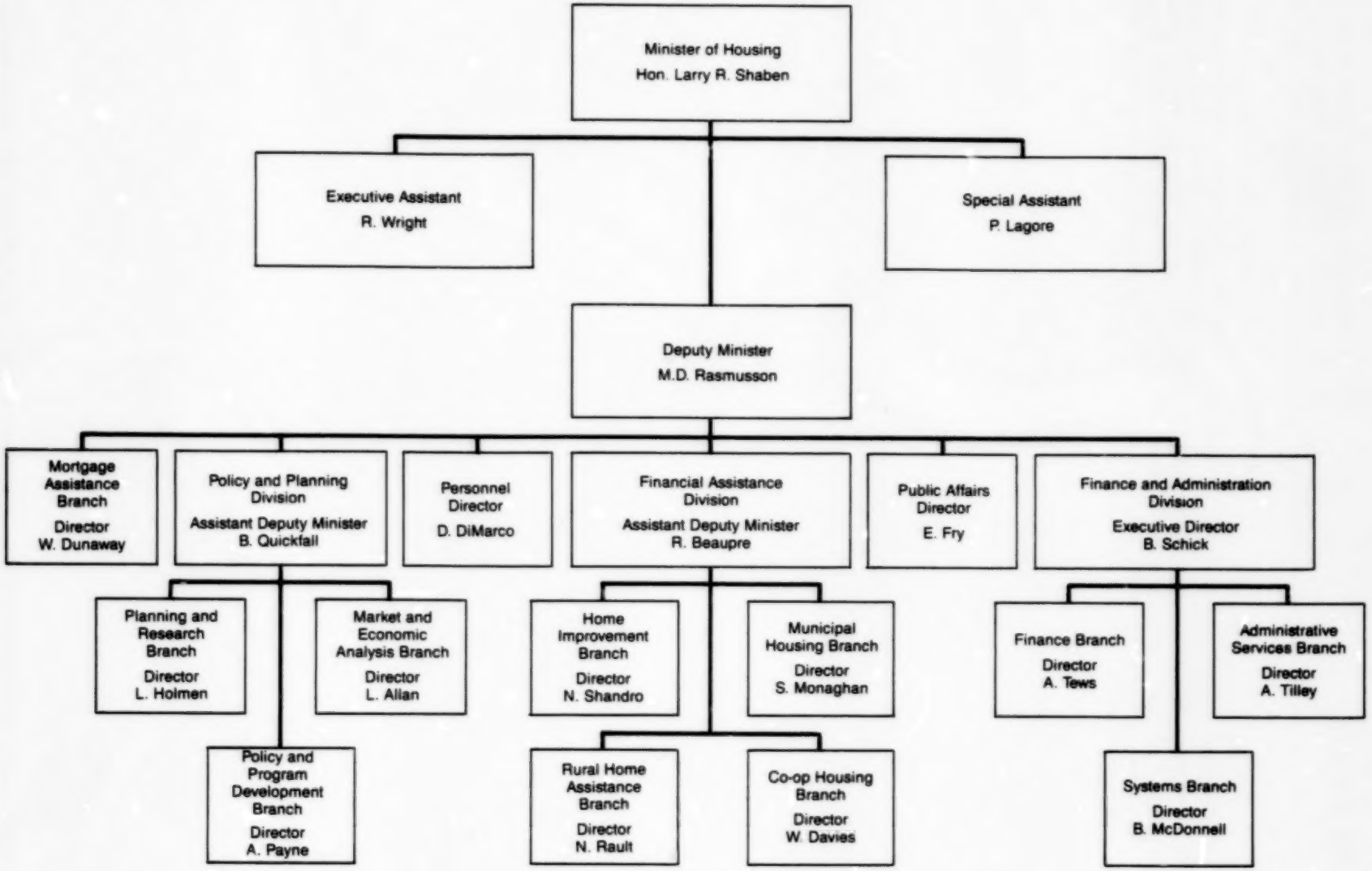
This is the second annual report of the Alberta Department of Housing. It is the first annual report to cover a full year, as the 1982-1983 report included the time period from April to November 1982, during which the Department of Housing was part of Alberta Housing and Public Works.

The Department of Housing has four major functions:

- policy and planning coordination for the Department, the Alberta Housing Corporation and the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation;
- self-help housing training and advice for families and individuals interested in building their own homes;
- innovative housing research with industrial and individual concerns; and
- grant program administration for targeted groups.

These activities are carried out by three Divisions — the Policy and Planning Division, the Financial Assistance Division, and the Finance and Administration Division. In addition, the Mortgage Assistance Branch administers the Alberta Heritage Fund Mortgage Interest Reduction Program.

ALBERTA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING
March 31, 1984



I. Policy and Planning Division

The Policy and Planning Division assists the Minister of Housing in developing and coordinating policies, programs and strategies designed to improve the housing situation of Albertans, particularly those with low or moderate incomes. Within this scope, the division examines existing housing programs, undertakes or sponsors research into improvements in all aspects of housing and develops recommendations on new or improved ways of making housing more accessible to Albertans.

Three branches make up the division: Market and Economic Analysis, Planning and Research, and Policy and Program Development. Through these three branches the division gathers, analyses and disseminates information, conducts research, proposes new policies and programs, revises existing housing programs, and coordinates and devises overall housing strategies.

Two areas were given special emphasis by the division during the year:

- research and development continued, including development of the Alberta Awards of Excellence in Housing Design; and
- reviews of existing housing programs were conducted, looking particularly at government activities in relation to future market conditions and the Province's housing requirements.

MARKET AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS BRANCH

The Market and Economic Analysis Branch provides professional research and policy and planning analysis to the Department in the area of market housing. The branch performs two major functions:

- program analysis which monitors, analyses and provides recommendations on major government lending programs concerning housing; and
- economic analysis involving the gathering, interpretation and dissemination of information about housing.

Program Analysis

Over the past year, program analysis concentrated on lending programs offered by the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation. The branch provided background analysis and recommendations for changes to the Corporation's lending programs, in light of the Province's rapidly changing economic situation.

Economic Analysis

Economic analysis continued to respond to the information requirements of the general public, private industry and government. A series of ongoing statistical reports were provided, including:

- a monthly report on residential construction activity in Alberta;
- an annual report on apartment vacancies and rental costs across the Province; and
- a monthly report on residential foreclosures.

In addition, economic analysis produced several specialized reports, including estimates and forecasts of housing requirements and construction levels and analysis of indexed mortgage operation. Technical and economic expertise were provided to the program analysis activities undertaken by the branch.

PLANNING AND RESEARCH BRANCH

The Planning and Research Branch conducts and supports research and development in building, site and subdivision design, energy conservation, technology and land and urban development to increase the quality and affordability of housing. The branch also:

- forecasts residential land and housing shortages in resource and other fast growing communities and recommends responses to such problems;
- evaluates residential land and infrastructure programs; and
- provides advice from a housing perspective on emerging technical issues and major resource, regional and urban development plans.

Major Activities

Most research and development work was carried out through the Innovative Housing Grants Program. This program provides grants of up to $25,000 to industry, organizations, and individuals for research and development activities in housing. In 1983-1984, nineteen projects were completed. Most were documented and reports were published to encourage application of the results of the research. Some of the major published projects were:

- **Assessment of Energy Saving Measures used in the ER-1 Conservation/Solar Research House**
  by G.M. Rekken & Associated Engineers/ D. Gordon Howell
- **Fresh Air Intake for Fireplaces**
  by Michael Hatzinikolas, Professional Engineer
- **Ecostud Building System**
  by Ecostud Building Systems
- **A Strategy for Residential Land Use for the City of Lethbridge**
  by the City of Lethbridge
- **Manufactured Housing Alternative**
  by Manufactured Housing Association

- **Grey Water Heat Recovery System**
  by Dirk and Price Engineering Ltd.
- **Solaroll Radiant Floor Heating**
  by Solshine Energy Systems Ltd.
- **Senior Citizen Village Concept**
  by Nu-West Development
- **Manufactured Housing in Resource Communities — A New Approach**
  by Garry C. Frost, Architect
- **Search for Urban Community Design Cell: A Competitive Design Approach**
  by the Land Use Planning Group
- **Archifest '83 — The Affordable Housing Design Competition**
  by Alberta Architects' Association

The branch also published a series of studies on design preferences and trade-offs for moderately priced housing in Alberta; and completed a number of internal studies, including an investigation of the implications of new legislation to extend the Condominium Property Act to include bare land.

The branch continued to monitor major resource and industrial developments and investment plans, forecasting their impact on housing supply and the residential construction industry.

A new initiative was taken in September 1983 when the Minister of Housing announced that the Department would sponsor an ongoing competition for Alberta Awards of Excellence in Housing Design. The 1984 Competition will be held during the summer of 1984 and awards will be presented at the conference of the Canadian Home Builders Association (Alberta) in Jasper in September.

The objectives of the Competition are to recognize and encourage the achievements of builders who build and market high quality, moderately priced housing in Alberta and to focus public attention on the best examples of such housing. Eligible houses are single-detached dwellings, semi-detached dwellings, and town houses, including manufactured housing units completed and available for sale within one year prior to the date of entry.

For purposes of the Competition, four contest areas were established: Edmonton, Calgary, other cities and other areas. Applications will be judged against other entries in the same contest area. There will be up to six awards of $5000 each, with two each for Calgary and Edmonton and one for each of the other areas. An additional award of $10,000 will be given to the overall winner.

Entries will be judged on the basis of the following criteria:
- curb appeal;
- design effectiveness, based on such factors as value for cost, special features to increase marketability, layout of the floor plan, design flexibility and good development potential
- construction technology and techniques which improve quality and/or reduce cost;
- sales record; and
- special project features.

All entries will be judged by a jury which will be chaired by the Deputy Minister, Department of Housing. Senior staff of the Department along with representatives from the Canadian Home Builders Associationn (Alberta), the Urban Development Institute (Alberta), and the Alberta Association of Architects were appointed by the Minister of Housing to serve as jury members.

POLICY AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT BRANCH

The Policy and Program Development Branch examines and recommends directions for the Province's social housing and related programs. To achieve these goals the branch:
- assesses new housing policy alternatives;
- monitors and evaluates programs;
- develops administrative procedures for new or modified housing programs;
- assesses housing client needs;
- coordinates and initiates interdepartmental and intergovernmental policy development activities; and
- funds and manages nine social housing registries.

Highlights of branch activities during the year were:
- analysis of policies and evaluation of programs in a number of areas including rural housing in Northern Alberta;
- preparation of medium-term housing plans;
- documentation of policy, procedures and guidelines for the Rural and Native Housing Program and Co-operative Housing Action Program;
- a study of housing needs of Alberta senior citizens not residing in government-assisted housing;
- preparation of profiles of participants in the Rural Home Assistance Program and the Seniors' Home Improvement Program; and
- preparation of an interdepartmental response to the Klufas Report on services for the disabled.

II. Financial Assistance Division

The Financial Assistance Division provides housing assistance to Alberta residents in the areas of self-help home ownership, home improvements, financial incentives for rental housing investment and financial incentives to municipalities for residential land creation.

The Division has four branches: Municipal Housing, Home Improvement, Rural Home Assistance and Co-operative Housing. In addition, a Calgary office provides contact with potential clients in southern Alberta.

MUNICIPAL HOUSING BRANCH

The Municipal Housing branch provides assistance to Albertans through four programs.

Alberta Home Conversion Program was introduced in April 1980 to stimulate the development of rental accommodation. Owners of existing housing and owners of new homes under construction could be eligible for an interest subsidy of five per cent on a maximum loan of $10,000 under the program. The subsidy was available for up to ten years. The deadline for applications was March 31, 1984.

Alberta Municipal Housing Incentive Program was introduced in April 1980 to promote economic land development and the construction of medium density housing, and assist municipalities in financing the cost of growth through the provision of grants. These grants are based on the rate of new housing production in relation to production in previous years and the number of eligible units built. Housing production levels are measured against the base level, which is the average number of dwellings started in a municipality over the past three years.

Effective January 1, 1981, an additional incentive of $500 was introduced. Grants are provided as follows:

- $500 per eligible unit for production in excess of 0 and up to and including 50 per cent of the base level;
- $1000 per eligible unit for production in excess of 50 per cent and up to and including 75 per cent of the base level;
- $1500 per eligible unit for production in excess of 75 per cent and up to and including 100 per cent of the base level; and
- $2000 per eligible unit for production in excess of 100 per cent of the base level.

During 1983-1984, fifty municipalities received a total of $12,571,000 under the program.

MUNICIPALITIES THAT RECEIVED FUNDING UNDER THE ALBERTA MUNICIPAL HOUSING INCENTIVE PROGRAM IN 1983-84 FISCAL YEAR

Athabasca	$ 105,500
Airdrie	34,500
Bashaw	32,500
Bassano	8,000
Beaumont	3,000
Blackfalds	62,500
Bow Island	2,500
Bowden	7,000
Calgary	9,109,500
Calmar	14,500
Camrose	11,000
Canmore	14,500
Cardston	3,000
Castor	15,000
Chipman	7,500
Cochrane	6,000
Crossfield	26,000
Crowsnest Pass	23,500
Didsbury	6,000
Edmonton	1,707,000
Fairview	34,000
Fort McMurray	148,000
Gibbons	13,000
Hanna	45,000
High River	18,500
Hinton	20,500
Lac La Biche	77,500
Leduc	132,000
Lethbridge	266,500
Linden	500
Lloydminster	3,000
Lomond	3,500
Lougheed	6,000
Medicine Hat	20,500
Morinville	29,500
Morin	6,500
Nanton	10,500
Okotoks	2,000
Ponoka	26,000
Red Deer	168,500
Rocky Mountain House	13,000
St. Albert	37,000
Spruce Grove	13,000
Stony Plain	81,500
Strathcona, County #20	81,000
Strathmore	16,000
Thorhild	19,500
Turner Valley	2,000
Vulcan	16,000
Westlock	33,500
Wetaskiwin	26,500
Whitecourt	1,000
TOTAL FUNDING	$12,571,000

HOME IMPROVEMENT BRANCH

The Home Improvement Branch provides assistance through three programs:

— Alberta Pioneer's Repair Program
— Seniors' Home Improvement Program
— Home Adaptation Program

Alberta Pioneers' Repair Program ceased to accept grant applications on November 30, 1982. However, grant recipients approved before that date have a period of four years from the date of approval in which to spend the funds awarded to them.

Seniors' Home Improvement Program provides funds to senior citizen homeowners, with low to moderate incomes, to improve and repair their homes. It is intended that the program will assist senior citizens to stay longer in their homes, and generate additional economic activity in the home repair and retail areas.

To be eligible for the Seniors' Home Improvement Program grant, an applicant must be at least 65 years-of-age or a widow or widower aged 55 to 64 years. Applicants must have lived in Alberta for at least one year prior to application, be either a Canadian citizen or Landed Immigrant, and have at least 10-years residency in Canada. The home must be the place of residency for at least nine months per year.

The amount of grant awarded is determined by the total income of the applicant and spouse for the last calendar year, as per the following schedule:

Total Income	**Amount of Grant**
$15,000 or less, or presently receiving the Alberta Assured Income Supplement	$3000
$15,001 to $17,500	$2000
$17,501 to $20,000	$1000

Since the commencement of the program on December 1, 1982 a total of 45,254 grant applications have been approved, consisting of a total commitment of $128,463,000.

During the 1983-1984 fiscal year 29,233 grants were approved under the Seniors' Home Improvement Program. Of the approved applications, 86 per cent qualified for the full $3000, eight per cent received $2000, and six per cent received $1000. The total commitment of funds for the period was $72,208,000. Expenditures by seniors from existing grants amounted to $75,188,799.68.

In February 1984, the income policy concerning the Seniors' Home Improvement Program was revised. A total of 4,890 applicants who did not receive the full $3000 grant at the time of approval were advised that if their combined income for 1983 was lower than their 1982 income, they may be eligible for an increase in their grant.

Spot inspections are undertaken by Inspectors of the Home Improvement Branch to monitor the validity of claims made for materials purchased or services performed. For the 1983-1984 fiscal year 1,154 spot inspections were completed. In addition, 427 inspections were completed in response to requests from seniors to resolve disputes between applicants and contractors or suppliers.

Home Adaptation Program provides grants of $1000 to homeowners, tenants or landlords who are wheelchair users, or who have a wheelchair user residing with them, for adaptations to provide the wheelchair user access and mobility within the home. Applicants must have resided in Alberta for the past year and have a current adjusted family income of not more than $25,500 per year. Landlords who apply must be willing to make adaptations to an existing or proposed residential building to accommodate one or more wheelchair users.

Since the commencement of the program on April 1, 1978, 971 applications have been approved, amounting to a commitment of $971,000. A total of 154 applications were approved for the 1983-1984 fiscal year, with a cost commitment of $154,000. Of the approved applicants, 69 per cent were homeowners, 16 per cent were landlords, and 15 per cent were tenants.

RURAL HOME ASSISTANCE BRANCH

The objective of the Rural Home Assistance Branch is to help families and communities in northern areas of Alberta to build their own homes. The branch is responsible for four programs: the Isolated Communities Housing Program which is operative in 24 isolated or semi-isolated communities; the Metis Settlement Housing Program which operates in eight Metis settlements (Caslan, Kikino, Fishing Lake, Elizabeth, East Prairie, Big Prairie, Gift Lake and Paddle Prairie); a home repair program for all associated communities; and a sewer and water program for all the above communities.

During fiscal year 1983-1984, the branch:

— disseminated information on the Rural Home Assistance Programs in selected isolated communities and Metis settlements;
— accepted applications for housing assistance for residents;
— ensured that need and eligibility criteria were met;
— planned housing projects with each community;
— assisted in drafting housing projects with each community;
— supervised construction and provided technical counselling;
— coordinated the project with other available programs; and
— monitored and reviewed the progress and financial costs of the projects.

Housing grants are distributed to each community on a per house basis. The community is responsible to ensure that houses are built within their budget allocation. Although there are no restrictions on the type of home that can be built, preference is given to construction methods that make use of local labour and materials.

During the 1983-1984 fiscal year, 67 new units were funded in isolated communities and 62 in Metis settlements, with 69 homes repaired to an acceptable standard. All of the new homes had water and sewer "roughed-in" with the aim of providing indoor plumbing in due course. In addition, 65 other sewer and water projects were funded, including "roughed-in" and complete hook-up. A total of 607 new homes have been built by communities under this program since it began in 1977/78.

CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING ACTION PROGRAM BRANCH

The objective of the Co-operative Housing Action Program Branch (C.H.A.P.) is to encourage and initiate self-help housing. The four basic functions of the branch are to:

- coordinate land, financing and construction;
- provide organization, training and moral support for the families to act as their own general contractors;
- assist the families to complete their construction plans; and
- provide construction advice and support during the construction phase.

The training course provided under the Program is 12 weeks in length. In addition, the branch offers a two week course called the Home Ownership Program (H.O.P.), for applicants who wish to hire a builder to construct their house.

During fiscal year 1983-1984 there were 430 starts and 448 completions:

Region	Program	Starts	Completions
Bonnyville	C.H.A.P.	53	63
	H.O.P.	73	74
Calgary	C.H.A.P.	113	93
	H.O.P.	1	22
Edmonton	C.H.A.P.	44	51
	H.O.P.	12	21
Lethbridge	C.H.A.P.	25	9
	H.O.P.	0	2
Peace Country	C.H.A.P.	24	19
	H.O.P.	24	34
Red Deer	C.H.A.P.	28	24
	H.O.P.	6	10
Westlock/Hinton	C.H.A.P.	23	20
	H.O.P.	4	6

These homes were financed either privately or through the Alberta Family Home Purchase Program, or the Rural and Native Housing Program, a 75/25 cost-shared federal/provincial program.

Under the Rural and Native Housing Program there were 209 starts, an increase of nine over the previous year. A Policy and Procedures Manual was completed and implemented for this Program. Also during 1983-1984, farmers became eligible to apply under this program, provided they met wage and family guidelines and could demonstrate a need.

The special projects section provided advice and support for nine special projects featuring innovative design, materials or methods. In return, the branch received information on the results, to be incorporated into future projects.

The C.H.A.P. Self-Help display completed a three year tour throughout the Province and was discontinued in October 1983.

III. Finance and Administration Division

The Finance and Administration Division performs the following functions:

- coordinates, consolidates, analyses, and recommends departmental budgets;
- ensures the accuracy and validity of all financial transactions, including prompt processing of these transactions and collection of departmental revenues;
- provides comprehensive administrative services and advice to the Department; and
- provides comprehensive EDP and word processing services and advice to the Department.

This mandate is carried out by three branches — Finance, Administrative Services and Systems.

FINANCE BRANCH

This branch is responsible for the following activities:

- coordinates, reviews and recommends the departmental budget;
- monitors expenditures against budgetary intentions by issuing reports and recommends fiscal solutions;
- verifies all expenditures associated with departmental budgets;
- issues financial information documents to program areas and provides interpretation and advice as required;
- conducts reviews of financial concepts among expenditure and/or receiving officers to assist in fulfilling their responsibilities; and
- ensures that all departmental receivables and revenues are properly documented, collected and reported.

During the fiscal year, the accounts payable staff processed a monthly average of 1500 invoices which totalled $440 million.

Accounts receivable dealt with an average of 1800 transactions monthly, which totalled approximately $2.6 million, and distributed salary cheques for the Department.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES BRANCH

The Administrative Services Branch consists of three major units: the records centre, supply and services centre and the library. Its services are extended to 18 branches of the Department in 13 locations.

The records centre achieved significant progress in implementing the Records Management Program as it related to the development and implementation of the subject classification system, retention and disposal schedules, and consulting services.

The supply and services centre provided the following services:

- purchase of material and supplies, leasing services, equipment and furniture;
- vehicle administration, insurance coordination, mailing and courier service, space allocations and maintenance of facilities, parking, telecommunications and travel coordination;
- coordination and control of fixed assets;
- telephone reception and information services to the public;
- central printing and duplication service;
- S.T.E.P. and P.E.P. coordination; and
- contract administration.

Accomplishments in 1983-1984 included:

- implementation of an automated inventory system;
- provision of support to the Department in the area of general administration and consultative services; and
- expansion of the central printing and duplication services.

The library provides a collection of approximately 4000 books and 75 periodical subscriptions as well as government documents, archive items and microfiche for use by Department and Corporation staff. Library staff also do research and reference work to identify relevant and timely sources of information and acquire and organize these materials.

In 1983-1984, the library completed a major inventory of the publication collection, instituted a new catalogue system using the SPIRES system, and introduced VCR facilities.

SYSTEMS BRANCH

The Systems Branch is responsible for the following activities:

- formulates short- and long-range plans and objectives for departmental information and word processing systems;
- plans and manages the development and implementation of new information and word processing systems; and
- provides maintenance and technical and consultative support for operational information and word processing systems.

In 1983-1984, the branch developed and implemented new systems for fixed assets, budget reporting, library indexing and the Innovative Housing Grants Program. Maintenance and technical and consultative services were provided for the Alberta Heritage Fund Mortgage Interest Reduction Program, Seniors' Home Improvement Program, Housing Registry Program, and apartment vacancy survey systems. Word processing support and consultative services were provided to all branches of the Department.

IV. Mortgage Assistance Branch

Alberta Heritage Fund Mortgage Interest Reduction Program

On September 7, 1982, the Government of Alberta announced the Alberta Heritage Fund Mortgage Interest Reduction Program as part of Phase Two of the Economic Resurgence Plan. The program was designed to relieve financial pressure on Alberta homeowners, caused by high mortgage interest rates.

Funded by the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, the Alberta Heritage Fund Mortgage Interest Reduction Program is aimed specifically at shielding Alberta homeowners from high mortgage interest rates over a two-year benefit period, which commenced on September 1, 1982 and will end on August 31, 1984.

The Mortgage Assistance Branch was established to administer the program, to process eligible applications, and to respond to inquiries from applicants and lending institutions.

Program brochures, applications and other forms were available from local financial institutions, as well as the Mortgage Assistance Branch. Applicants and their mortgage lenders must complete appropriate sections of the application form. Completed application forms are then sent to the Mortgage Assistance Branch for processing.

Eligibility for Benefits

Eligibility for benefits applies to the principal residence of Alberta homeowners who are Canadian citizens or permanent residents. The homeowner must be named on the Certificate of Title of the property against which there is a registered mortgage at an interest rate in excess of 12.5 per cent.

Mortgage principal amounts up to a maximum of $60,000 per applicant are eligible for interest reduction. Existing mortgages and mortgages taken out, renewed or assumed during the program benefit period are eligible.

Assistance is granted on several types of mortgage financing including conventional fixed-rate mortgages, variable rate mortgages, graduated payment mortgages, demand loans, Agreements for Sale provided they registered qualifying debts with effective interest rates above 12.5 per cent. All types of residential dwelling units are considered, including mobile homes on the applicant's owned or leased land, provided other program eligibility requirements are met.

Subject to the restriction of a maximum eligible interest rate, benefits are usually paid as a monthly rebate equal to the difference between the principal and interest component of the actual monthly payment and the amount that would be charged if the mortgage rate were 12.5 per cent. Benefits may be paid retroactively provided application is received by August 31, 1984.

Program Activity

The delivery of the Alberta Heritage Fund Mortgage Interest Reduction Program is the responsibility of the Mortgage Assistance Branch. Functions of the branch include development of administrative procedures, receipt of applications, determination of applicant eligibility, processing approved applications in accordance with Program guidelines and regulations, records maintenance and responding to public enquiries.

Over 140,000 telephone inquiries were handled by the branch from April 1, 1983 to March 31, 1984, an average of over 2690 calls per week.

By the end of the 1983-1984 fiscal year, a total of 158,202 applications had been received, 22,517 of which were received during this past fiscal year. Sixty-nine per cent of the total number of applications were received within the first four months of the program, 17 per cent were received in the next three months, and 14 per cent were received from April 1, 1983 to March 31, 1984. A total of 153,754 applications were approved and a total of $200,536,627 in benefits had been paid to March 31, 1984.

The Mortgage Interest Review Board was established in October 1982 to receive applications for review where the applicant was deemed ineligible or where calculation of assistance was disputed. Hearings were held by the Review Board as often as required at suitable locations throughout the Province. By the end of March 1984, 3541 applications had been reviewed; of this number 2969 were allowed and 572 denied. Two thousand, eight hundred and seventeen applications were reviewed between April 1, 1983 and March 31, 1984; 2352 of this number were allowed and 465 denied.

The Mortgage Assistance Branch and Alberta Consumer and Corporate Affairs distributed a new publication entitled **"Taking Charge of Your Money"**. A circular introducing the brochure was included with the end of October mailing of mortgage rebate cheques to 91,581 households across the Province. As a result, during the months of November and December 1983, 5953 telephone calls and 874 letters were received. The branch mailed out 3886 copies of "Taking Charge of Your Money".

To assist homeowners with their financial planning the Mortgage Assistance Branch distributed a brochure called **"How to Cut Mortgage Costs"**. This brochure provided Alberta homeowners with information pertaining to various options available when obtaining a mortgage, and explained ways to reduce the cost of existing mortgages.

Eighty-two thousand and seventy-seven copies of the brochure were distributed to applicants in receipt of benefits, information copies were provided to educational institutions throughout the Province, and a supply was sent to individual government departments dealing with the

public. The response to the brochure was encouraging, with numerous requests for additional copies being received from educational facilities to be used as handouts in courses related to mortgages and financial planning. To the end of March 1984, approximately 96,160 copies were distributed.

Renegotiation Option

In response to significantly lower mortgage interest rates the Renegotiation Option was announced on February 9, 1983. Specifically, this option provides participants in the Alberta Heritage Fund Mortgage Interest Reduction Program with reimbursement of costs if they renegotiate their mortgages to a lower interest rate. The financial assistance is the least of:

- the actual interest penalty cost of renegotiating plus up to $200 of legal and administrative fees;
- up to three months interest penalty on up to $60,000 mortgage principal plus up to $200 for legal and administrative fees; or
- the equivalent of what the program would have paid in interest rebate before the renegotiation, less a processing cost of $100.

By April 1, 1983 the branch had begun a mailout of information on the Renegotiation Option to applicants receiving mortgage interest reduction benefits. In addition, approval was requested and received for three changes to the Renegotiation Option:

- to increase the ceiling on reimbursable legal and administration costs when applicants renegotiate with a new lender;
- to permit eligibility for the Renegotiation Option when mortgages are paid out; and
- to consider the savings in subsidies by the Alberta Home Mortage Corporation in calculating the maximum renegotiation benefits for applicants with Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation mortgages.

By the end of the fiscal year, a total of 6832 renegotiation applications had been received; a total of 6331 of these applications were approved.

V. Public Affairs Branch

The major responsibility of this branch is to provide communication services in support of departmental goals.

To help meet these goals, the Public Affairs Branch provides advice and professional expertise in the development of communication materials to inform the public about the Department's policies, programs and services. Information is provided through news releases, brochures, factsheets, reports, audio-visual productions, displays and advertising.

The branch is responsible for facilitating and coordinating joint communication plans with other Alberta Government departments and also provides internal communication advice and assistance.

During the past year, the focus of branch activities has been in support of the Innovative Housing Grants Program, the Alberta Awards of Excellence in Housing Design, the Alberta Heritage Fund Mortgage Interest Reduction Program and the Rural and Native Housing Program. The branch also initiated three general information publications: *A Guide to Alberta Government Housing Programs*, *Publications List and Telephone Guide to Housing Programs*, the latter for internal staff use.

The Public Affairs Branch provided public relations consultation, writing, and editorial services, as well as coordinating graphic design, print, photographic, distribution and display services. In fulfillment of it's facilitative function, the branch also implemented a departmental identity program and undertook administration of ISBN and ISSN numbering for all departmental publications.

VI. Personnel Branch

This branch has responsibility, authority and accountability for the following functions:

- coordinating and implementing the classification of employees, ensuring propriety of all transactions;
- coordinating, administering and implementing comprehensive services for the Department in the areas of:
  - training and development,
  - manpower planning,
  - personnel planning,
  - career counselling,
  - salary and benefits, and
  - occupational health and safety.
- investigating, analyzing and recommending solutions for employee relations problems; and
- coordinating the management and employee appraisal process and administering the related systems and procedures.

Major Accomplishments

The volume of activity increased within the Personnel Branch over the previous year as operations expanded in the areas of training and development and occupational health and safety.

Staffing and classification activity continued at active levels, particularly in the Seniors' Home Improvement and Mortgage Assistance Branches, where changes in branch structure necessitated modifications of staff assignments. Statistics related to staffing and classification processes indicate a total of 120 classification actions and 78 staff recruitment changes/transitions.

Other branch activity included revitalization of the Department's Occupational Health and Safety Program, as well as resolution of a number of employee relations issues with respect to the administration of the Collective Agreement.

Increased activity regarding an inhouse training and development function as a supplement to course work provided in the Government training calendar included:

- a number of redeployment workshops provided to employees of the Mortgage Assistance Branch;
- a series of workshops on the performance appraisal cycle delivered to supervisory staff of the Home Improvement Branch; and
- development of an employee relations course for Department managers.

VII. Financial Statement

COMPARATIVE SUMMARY OF PROGRAM EXPENDITURES

	1982-1983 ($000)	1983-1984* ($000)
Departmental Support Services		
Minister's Office	$ 201	$ 231
Deputy Minister's Office	129	145
Administrative Support	433	978
Personnel Administration	95	130
Total Vote 1	$ 858	$ 1,484
Policy Development and Financial Assistance for Housing		
Policy and Program Development	1,692	1,685
Housing Assistance	4,171	4,537
Financial Assistance for Housing	42,210	113,378
Total Vote 2	$ 48,073	$119,600
Alberta Heritage Fund Mortgage Interest Reduction Program		
Program Support	4,724	5,191
Financial Assistance	88,696	111,799
Total Vote 3	$ 93,420	$116,990
Alberta Housing Corporation		
Housing for Albertans	74,451	111,488
Total Vote 4	$ 74,451	$111,488
Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation		
Mortgage Assistance	79,959	90,500
Total Vote 5	$ 79,959	$90,500
TOTAL	$296,761	$440,062

*unaudited

Appendix A - Committees

The Department of Housing works towards its objectives through a number of committees. Among them are:

- **Alberta Planning Board** — reviews regional plans, finances the Regional Planning Commission, decides on subdivision appeals and Subdivision Regulation Waivers and advises the Minister of Municipal Affairs on the Planning Act and provincial land use policy.
- **Interdepartmental Committee on Regulatory Reform** coordinates Departmental responses on submissions made to the Caucus Committee on Regulatory Reform.
- **CMHC/AHC/Department Liaison Committee** — reviews joint programs and exchanges information on matters of federal/provincial concern.
- **Statistics Coordinating Committee** — coordinates information and ideas on statistical matters and advises on the development of consistent and comparable statistics within the government.
- **Joint CMHC/AHC/AHMC/Department Market Information Committee** — reviews information and forecasts on housing and land markets in Edmonton and Calgary.
- **Economic Committee of Housing and Urban Development Association of Canada** — reviews and forecasts housing in Calgary.
- **HUDAC/Housing Liaison Committee** — exchanges information on areas of mutual concern.
- **UDI/Housing Liaison Committee** — exchanges information on areas of mutual concern.
- **Olympic Games Operating Committee** — coordinates possible government services for the Olympic Winter Games and informs the departments involved regarding organization and facilities for the Games.
- **Three-Year Housing Plan Committee** — updates forecasts on housing requirements and recommends changes on housing, land and infrastructure levels for the Three-Year Housing Plan.
- **Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee on Senior Citizens** — coordinates services for senior citizens.
- **Interdepartmental Implementation Planning Committee on the Klufas Report** — developing a report on programs and services for the disabled, identifying an implementation plan and budget implications for Cabinet.
- **Athabasca University Relocation Housing Component Committee** — ensures that sufficient housing is available to accommodate the staff of Athabasca University in Athabasca.
- **Interdepartmental Committee on Long Term Care** — reviews issues related to long term care which affect the departments of Hospitals and Medicare, Social Services and Community Health and the Alberta Housing Corporation.
- **Manufactured Housing Advisory Council** — provides a forum for industry and government on issues related to the manufactured housing industry.
- **Housing and Urban Development Association of Canada Technical Research Committee** — assists, encourages and coordinates technical research to produce economical housing of improved design, and educates members, the public, and government regarding promising housing innovations.
- **Land Purchases Coordinating Committee** — screens all government land purchases made under the Land Purchases Act.
- **Interdepartmental Committee on Surveying and Mapping** — reviews and proposes surveying and mapping standards for the Province.
- **Northern Communities Advisory Committee** — coordinates programs to residents in the Northern Development Council's area of the Province.
- **Rural and Native Tri-partite Committee** — coordinates the Federal/Provincial Rural and Native Housing Programs in Alberta.
- **Innovative Housing Committee** — reviews and approves applications for the programs.